

## **Perception of Religious Leaders towards Suicide Bombing in Pakistan: A Case Study of Faisalabad City**

---

\*Muhammad Farooq

\*\*Muqarrab Akbar

\*\*\*Muhammad Idrees

### ***Abstract***

*This study was designed to measure the perception of religious leaders towards suicide bombing. Suicide bombing is the most dangerous and horrifying form of terrorism in the world today. This issue was at peak during 2010-11, over 500 such attacks occurred regularly around the world during this period and rate of suicide bombing was the highest in Pakistan. A Durkeimian analysis of altruistic and fatalistic suicide was used as a theoretical framework to examine why individuals surrender their lives to a terrorist organization. The present study explored those psychological, social and economic risk factors which were promoting suicide bombers in Pakistan. One hundred and twenty-five respondents of different maslak (Buralvi, Devbandi, Ahl-e-Hadit, Ahl-e-Tashe) were selected for this study by using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. The data was collected with the help of Interview Schedule. The collected data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Majority of the respondents reported that the suicide bombing was badly affecting the whole fabric of Pakistani Society.*

**Keywords:** Perception of religious leaders, Durkeimian analysis of altruistic and fatalistic suicide, Suicide bombing, affects, Chai-Square, Multiple Regression

### **Introduction:**

Suicide attack is the most virulent and horrifying form of terrorism in the world today. The mere rumor of an impending suicide attack can throw thousands of people into panic. Although suicide attacks account for a minority of terrorist acts, they are responsible for a majority of terrorism-related casualties, and the rate of attacks is rising rapidly across the globe. During 2000–2004, there were 472 suicide attacks in 22 countries, killing more than 7,000 and wounding tens thousands people. Most have been carried out by Islamist groups claiming religious motivation, also known as jihadis<sup>1</sup>. Suicide terrorism is a form of extremely committed or extremely deranged armed violence carried out in asymmetric fashion by someone who is intent on taking their own life or duped into thinking they want to take their own life in order to take the life of another or others<sup>2</sup>.

---

\*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad.

\*\*Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan.

\*\*\*M.Phil Scholar, Department of Sociology, Government College University, Faisalabad.

Suicide attacks are simple and low-cost operations that require no escape routes or rescue operations. In suicide attacks, there is no risk of losing information about the terrorist organization because the deaths of terrorists/attackers are certain<sup>3</sup>.

Most suicide attacks are executed by activating explosives, which are carried on the terrorist's body in the form of a portable explosive device, or are planted in a vehicle driven by the terrorist<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the suicide bomber essentially becomes a human bomb, and selects the time, place, and circumstances for activating the explosive device in an attempt to cause maximum damage to the target<sup>4</sup>. For terrorist organizations, human bomb attacks are one of the surest ways of hitting a target. The human bomb is a simple and low-cost operation, and the main objective is to guarantee that the enemy will be disturbed with an explosive belt or bag, the bomber has control over the target, location, and timing<sup>5</sup>.

Suicide attack is an ancient practice with a modern history. However, suicide bombing has its origin and continuance in the social environment of various regions of the world. It has its origins in the complex milieu of religious, social systems, oppression, war, political systems, globe and local political systems, economics and psychological and social dysfunction. It is truly a messy problem with no single solution<sup>6</sup>. Experts of law enforcing agencies claim that contemporary suicide attacks began in April 1983 when Hezbollah attacked western targets in Lebanon. A suicide bomber in a pickup truck loaded with explosives rammed into the U.S. Embassy in Beirut killing sixty-three people, including 17 Americans. In October of the same year a suicide bomber detonated a truck full of explosives at the U.S. Marine Corps barracks located at Beirut International Airport killing 220 U.S. Marines and 21 other U.S. service members. On the same day, a separate blast on the French compound in Beirut killed 58 French service members. These attacks resulted in the withdrawal of Western forces from Lebanon. Hezbollah then started using suicide attacks against the Israeli Defense Force in Lebanon and against South Lebanese Army posts. 20 people were slaughtered and 82 wounded due to a suicide bombing at the annual Shia Muslims congregation at the shrine of Bari Imam in Islamabad in 27 May 2005. Interior minister of Pakistan Aftab Ahmad Sherpao suffered minor injuries, 28 were killed, and 35 were injured (ten critically) in that act of terrorism after the minister finished speaking on April 28, 2007. In November, same year, a suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle into a PAF bus near Sargodha, killing seven officers of the Pakistan Air Force and 28 people suffered injuries. In Wah, twin suicide bombings killed 63 people and injured 81 people targeting Pakistan's main munitions factory, the Pakistan Ordnance Factories August 2008. In September, same year, Marriott Hotel was attacked by a massive suicide car bomb, killing over 60 and injuring 250. In May 2009 Suicide bombers detonated a vehicle loaded with 100 kilograms of explosives near offices of the capital city police officer (CCPO) and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Lahore killing at least 27 people and wounding 326, in addition to destroying a two-story building of the Rescue 15 police service. In July 2010, At least 42 people were killed and more than 180 others were wounded after two suicide bombers attacked a Sufi Islamic shrine at the Data

Durbar Complex in Lahore. In November 2010, At least 20 people were killed and more than 100 others injured in a suspected suicide truck bomb explosion, which targeted the Criminal Investigation Department building within Pakistan's major, southern city Karachi. Although they focused their initial attacks against military targets, they quickly changed tactics to targeting civilians<sup>7</sup>.

On December 25, same year, a female suicide bomber blew herself aimed a crowd at United Nations food center in the Bajaur region in which 46 people were killed and more than 100 were injured. Moreover, the role of women in carrying out suicide attacks has been focused of increasing concern. The use of women in suicide attacks may point to a broadening to include members of society not usually recruited by contemporary terrorist organizations for this type of mission. Although female participation in terrorism is not historically unusual (notably among left-wing groups), participation in suicide attacks is less common. Growing numbers of female suicide attackers may reflect a number of different factors. Many groups that have utilized suicide terrorism have employed female suicide bombers<sup>8</sup>. Female suicide bombers are relatively new. Their first known attack came in 1985 when a 16- years old girl, name Khyadali Sana, attack to Israeli Defense Force convoy and killed two soldiers at that time she was driving a truck. Since then, women have driven bomb-laden vehicles, carried bomber "bags," and strapped massive explosives and metal implements on their bodies in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Israel, and Turkey. Terrorist groups which have publicized the use of females attackers include the Syrian Socialist National Party (SSNP/PPS), the Sri Lanka Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Chechen rebels, Al Aqsa Martyrs, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and, most recently, Hamas<sup>7</sup>. With women becoming part of the terrorist process, a new door of gender is open for media coverage and exposure. "It is a woman who blew herself up, and with her exploded all the myths about women's weakness, submissiveness, and enslavement"<sup>9</sup>.

There is a high proportion of suicide attacks in Pakistan which cause the disorder in the society. The first suicide attack occurred in the country's capital Islamabad in 1995 when the bomber collided with his explosives-laden truck into the embassy of Egypt which killed 14 people. The bomber was Egyptian. After 9/11 it has become very common worldwide and getting political niche in the discourse of our life. Suicide bombing has become very burning and crucial issue in Pakistan especially after the participation of Pakistan in War on Terror. There is "179" total suicide attacks occurred in Pakistan since 2001 to 2010 in which "3380" people were expired and "7771" people injured. This thing shows that there is a constant threat of suicide attacks in Pakistan and they are increasing day by day.<sup>10</sup>

### **Gravity of the Problem:**

A suicide bombing is an attack on military and civilian target, in which attackers know that they will either certainly or most likely die in this process. Suicide attacks worldwide have risen from an average of 3 per year in the 1980 to about 10 per year in the 1990s. Suicide attack generally takes a form of bombing. The low cost and high lethality of the tactic have made it favorite with the guerilla groups. The main causes of suicide attacks in Pakistan are Sectarianism, the

Musharraf-Bush coalition in the war on terror and Pakistan's own track record over training Mujahidin and sending them to Afghanistan during Russian aggression. Suicide bombing badly affects the creditability of government administration especially the creditability of Law enforcement agencies, which creates a state of fear and uncertainty that impedes the activities of the entire community. When people do not perform their duties, they feel unrest, depression and other psychological and social disorders. Religious and cultural activities are also affected by suicide bombing because people are hesitated and feel fear to go to Masjides for Namaz. Religious gathering (conferences), even the Mazarat-e-Aolia are also attacked by suicide bombers. Terrorism has greatly affected the foreign investment in Pakistan. Foreign investment has decline to \$ 910.20 Million from \$1.4 Billion in Fy 08-09. Due to decline in investment poverty and unemployment rises. Poverty has reached to 41.4% from 37.5% in 2008-09. Due to unstoppable terrorism acts in Pakistan World Bank has blocked two lending key loans of worth \$820 Million till the conditions ameliorate to the paradigm. Similarly, Terrorism increases the expensive of the forces to meet their needs to fight against terrorism. Pakistan has received total disbursement of \$11,998 Million from US under Coalition Support Fund (CSF), out of this amount \$3,129 Million were economic related aid and security related aid amounted to \$8,869 Million. In addition, risk of the investors and more troops in Afghanistan deployment by US rise the risk of investors to invest in Pakistan that cause serious downfall of deposits of banking sector that shows deposits fell from Rs.3.77 Trillion to Rs3.17 trillion on September 2009<sup>11</sup>.

### **Theoretical Frame Work:**

A new framework is necessary to explain the suicide bombing phenomenon and properly direct prevention policy decisions. An effective framework should apply Durkheimian concepts to study suicide terrorism. Durkheim's study and classification of types of suicide provide an insight of suicide terrorism, but there are important differences between ordinary suicide and suicide terrorism. Despite these differences, when Durkheim's principles are applied to the phenomenon of suicide terrorism, it suggests that suicide terrorism will flourish in highly integrated and highly regulated social environments. Durkheim (1951) defines suicide as "all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself in which he is fully aware of the outcomes". To commit suicide, an individual has to have some idea of what he/she is doing. Therefore, if a person puts himself in a knowingly dangerous situation where death is likely or inevitable, it is considered suicide. Durkheim's altruistic and fatalistic suicide will be used to examine the circumstances that motivate an individual to sacrifice his life for a collective terrorist organization. Using this theoretical framework, it can be seen how an individual can be recruited, trained and to carry out a suicide attack while being fully aware that they are most valuable to the organization when they die. Terrorist organizations use many methods for recruitment that range from exploiting an individual's political and economic oppression to using one's concentrated belief in the collective organization as a means for martyrdom.

According to Durkheim, altruistic suicide more likely occurs when social integration is too strong in society. In this type of suicide individuals are highly

integrated into the society. This individual understands himself solely as a member of the group. They are almost completely absorbed in the group and completely discard their individual personalities for the idea that they have become servants<sup>1</sup>. Insufficient individuation, as can be seen with terrorist suicide bombers, can make an individual feel it is his duty to commit suicide for the betterment of the organization<sup>12</sup>.

Durkheim argues in effect that the relation of suicide rates to social regulation is curvilinear, where high suicide rates are associated with both excessive individuation and excessive regulation. Looking at excessive regulation, the demands of the organization are so great that suicide varies directly rather than inversely with the degree of integration. Hence an individual who strongly believes in a terrorist organization's ideology and goals will become a human-bomb and sacrifice himself at group's ideology.

He believes to reform not only religion but also to reform society; perhaps he will also imagine the highest sort of destiny reserved for himself<sup>13</sup>. Durkheim also contends that altruistic suicide may actually spring from the hope and belief that there is a beautiful life after death. For suicide bombers, the belief in becoming a martyr following death can in some cases be enough to engage in the suicide attack. Suicide for martyrdom is also labeled acute altruistic suicide.

The most underdeveloped category of Durkheim's suicide typology, fatalistic suicide occurs from excessive rules and regulations are imposed on individuals. Individuals who endure excessive regulation are blocked from legitimate opportunities for advancement in society. "Fatalistic suicides involve an escape from a normative situation from which there is no appeal"<sup>14</sup>. The process of over control where an individual is blocked from political freedom and economic opportunity creates a condition of over-control. Stack (1979) contends, "In such a totalitarian environment, marked by relatively low freedom and respect for human dignity, already suicidal persons have an additional reason for viewing life as meaningless and are more apt to commit suicide".

It can be argued that while many individuals who are recruited and trained for suicide attacks are well educated, these individuals are usually highly integrated into the terrorist organization. Those individuals who are excessively regulated are often religious males, who are often young, unmarried, unemployed, with some high school education. This profile has been found to fit the Hamas Shahid, the Black Tigers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and the Shiites in Lebanon<sup>15;16</sup>. The socio-economic status of individuals has therefore been found to be similar among many suicide terrorists that fit the fatalistic suicide typology.

### **Objectives of Study:**

To probe the perception of religious leaders about suicide bombing

To suggest some possible measure for the reduction of suicide bombing

### **Materials and Methods:**

The methodological techniques and ways of analyzing the observations play a significant role in social research. Social scientists have commonly been using comprehensive sociological approach and advance techniques in social research in

the modern era. Social scientists now use the sophisticated methodological tools and techniques in social research. Therefore, methodology is a frame for researcher. “The methodology is a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which the claims for knowledge are evaluated<sup>17</sup>”. The validity, reliability and precision of analytical analysis depend upon scientific methodology. The present study had been conducted in the city area of Faisalabad. The target population of present study was consisted of all the religious leaders of different Maslaks (i.e. Barelvi, Deobandi, Ahle-Hadith and Ahle Tashe) who were running the registered mosques in Faisalabad city. Sampling frame was prepared in order to draw the sample. Stratified proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. One hundred twenty-five Imam Masjid were interviewed. Data was collected during October and November 2010. Simple Percentage, Chi-square test and Gamma Statistics were applied to check the central tendency and to ascertain association between independent and dependent variables. Multiple linear regression model was also used to check the relationship between various independent variables and one dependent variable.

### **Sampling Frame:**

A sampling frame is a complete map that contains all the sampling units in a population.

There were following Masajids of different Maslak or sects in city areas of Faisalabad.

Msalak/Sect	Registered		Non-registered	
	Mosques	Madrassas	Mosques	Madrassas
Barelvi	460	394	1121	115
Deobandi	190	172	467	48
Ahl-e-Hadith	97	81	224	23
Ahl-e-Tashe	56	6	-----	-----
Total	803	653	1812	186

Source: District Commissioner office (DCO)

### Results and Discussions:

Analysis and interpretation of data are the most important steps for conducting scientific social research. Without these steps, generalization and prediction cannot be achieved which is the basic need in social research. Three main indicators i.e. income, moderate opinion of the religious leaders and education were used as explanatory variables to measure the perception of the religious leaders in the present study. While foreign investment, religious leaders must be brought into the main stream of society, social and psychological disorders were used as indicators to construct the dependent variable i.e. perception of the religious leaders. Three hypotheses were constructed in the light of Durkheimian concepts about suicide to measure the perception of the religious leaders.

### Research Hypothesis:

Higher the income of the respondents, stronger opinion of the religious leaders that the suicide bombing will likely badly effects the foreign investment in Pakistan.

**Table-1: Association between the higher income of the respondents' opinion and effects on foreign investment in Pakistan**

Income	To Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All	Total
Up to 5000	29 51.70%	20 35.70%	7 12.50%	56 100.00%
5001-10000	6 18.70%	14 43.70%	12 37.50%	32 100.00%
10001 or above	17 45.90%	12 32.40%	8 21.60%	37 100.00%
Total	52 41.60%	46 36.80%	27 21.60%	125 100.00%

**Chi-square = 12.10 D.F = 4 P-value (significance) = 0.017\* Gamma = 0.172**

Table-1 depicts the association between the income of the respondents and effect on foreign investment in Pakistan and the value of chi-square shows that there is significant association between the two attributes. Therefore, “the hypothesis is accepted because the perception of religious leaders regarding their income that foreign investment was badly affected due to suicide bombing in Pakistan”. While the value of the Gamma= 0.172 is showing the positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Similar results were found by Hussain (2007) he concluded that Terrorism has greatly affected the foreign investment in Pakistan. Foreign investment is decline to \$ 910.20 Million from \$1.4 Billion in Fy 08-09. Dye to decline in investment poverty and unemployment rises.

**Research Hypothesis:**

Higher the age of the respondents, stronger opinion of the respondents that the religious leader should bring into the main stream of society to reduce suicide bombing.

**Table-2: Association between the age of the respondents and opinion of respondents that religious leaders should bring into the main stream of society.**

Age Of The Respondents	Religious Leaders Should Bring Into Mainstream of Society			Total
	To Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All	
<b>19-28</b>	19 76.00%	6 24.00%	0 0.00%	25 100.00%
<b>29-38</b>	26 33.30%	26 33.30%	26 33.30%	78 100.00%
<b>39 Or Above</b>	8 36.30% 36.30%	9 40.90%	5 22.70%	22 100.00%
<b>Total</b>	53 42.40%	41 32.80%	31 24.80%	125 100.00%

**Chi-square = 18.0 D.F. = 4 P-value (Significance) = 0.001\*\* Gamma= 0.387**

Table-2 shows the independence between the age of the respondents and opinion of respondents that religious leaders should bring into the main stream of society. The value of chi-square shows the highly significant association between the two attributes. Therefore, the hypothesis that, “Higher the age of the respondents, stronger opinion of the respondents that the religious leader should bring into the main stream of society to reduce suicide bombing” is accepted. The value of Gamma = 0.387 is showing the positive relationship between two attributes. Similar findings were found by Rose (2003) who concluded that Religious terrorism is terrorism performed by groups or individuals, the motivation of which is typically rooted in faith-based tenets. Terrorist acts throughout the centuries have been performed on religious grounds with the hope to either spread or enforce a system of belief, viewpoint or opinion. Religious terrorism does not in itself necessarily define a specific religious standpoint or view, but instead usually defines an individual or a group view or interpretation of that belief system's teachings. It was necessary to bring the religious leaders/Pop/Saint into the main stream of society and give them



opportunity to participate in every field of life and convey their message to the masses.

### Research Hypothesis:

Higher the education of the religious leader, stronger opinion of the religious leaders that suicide bombing may create Social and Psychological disorders

**Table-3: Association between educational status and social and Psychological disorders**

Educational Status	Social and Psychological disorders			Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	
Elementary	23 65.70%	5 14.30%	7 20.00%	35 100.00%
S.S.C & H.S.S.C.	11 17.70%	24 38.70%	27 43.50%	62 100.00%
Graduation or above	8 28.50%	15 53.60%	5 17.90%	28 100.00%
Total	42 33.60%	44 35.20%	39 31.20%	125 100.00%

**Chi-square = 119.48 D.F = 4 P-value (Significance) = 0.000\*\* Gamma = 0.605**

Table-3 depicts the independence between educational status and social and psychological disorders. The value of chi-square shows the highly significant association between the two attributes. Therefore, the hypothesis that “education and Social and Psychological disorders are independent” is rejected. The value of Gamma = 0.605 is showing the positive relationship between two attributes. The above results were same as analyzed by WHO explained the consequences of terrorist threat and terrorist acts for mental health of the individual, groups of individuals and community in general. Mental and social disorders emerging in the victims/society of terrorism is described. Moreover, the most common conditions are depression, anxiety and psychosomatic problems such as insomnia, or back and stomach aches.

### Step Wise Description of the Model:

The highly significant P-value=0.000 for the regression coefficient  $b_i=0.296$ , for the variable “low income generation opportunities” that increase the risk of youth bulge and violent conflict had at least 0.296 points. The result shows that there is a highly significant association between the low income generation opportunities and Terrorism. The highly significant p-value=0.000 with regression coefficient  $b_i=0.280$  for the variable “Economic recession” shows a strong relationship that increase the youth bulge and deviance 0.280. The inference describes that economic recession and youth bulge/unrest had highly significant association. The value of  $b_i=0.236$  with p-value=0.000 for the variable “Poverty” increased in poverty in the state caused 0.236 point increase in conflict and crime in the state like lawlessness, militancy. The coefficient of regression  $b_i=-0.173$  with p-value=0.001 shows a highly significant relationship between the suicide bombing and socio-cultural background of the tribal areas.

### Conclusions:

Through analyzing the perception of the religious leaders regarding foreign investment, religious leaders must be brought into the main stream of society, social and psychological disorders of mass were proved. Thus, the religious leaders perceived regarding their income that foreign investment was badly affected due to suicide bombing in Pakistan.” Beside this, senior respondents reported that the religious leader should be brought into the main stream of society i.e. member of the

piece committee and as local representative in order to reduce suicide bombing.” Moreover, they reported that suicide bombings were also created social and psychological disorders among the mass. Durkheim’s altruistic and fatalistic suicide reflected that terrorist organizations were motivating the young students in the name of God and their preaching were fascinating them. They ready to do this illegal act. Terrorist acts confronted by a state cannot be eliminated by the affected States alone because of the international linkage of the terrorist groups. It is, therefore, clear that all the nations must form a common front to fight terrorism. Much needed spirit of international cooperation in the required degree is not properly established; the world would become a dangerous place to live. It is for this reason that one nation’s peace and security will be determined by the success of all nations.’ International community should come forward to eradicate the any kind of terrorism in the world.

### References:

1. Hoffman, Bruce. “Security for a New Century”. (Washington, D.C., 2005) September 23, 2005 (Briefing for Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Staff).
2. Gambetta, Diego. “Making sense of suicide missions”. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)
3. Sprinzak, Ehud.. “Rational Fanatics,” foreign Policy, September-October, 2000, P. 68
4. Ganor, Bohaz. Suicide Terrorism: An Overview. In Countering Suicide Terrorism, 134– Herzliya: 2000, ICT
5. Schweitzer, Yoram. “Suicide Bombing: The Ultimate Weapon?” August 7, 2001; Available from <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articleDET.cfm>
6. Nasara, Hassan. An Arsenal of Believers. The New Yorker, November 6, 2001.
7. Hutchinson, Walter. “The systematic roots of suicide bombing” Edith Cowan University, Mt Lawley, (Perth 6050, Western Australia, 2007)
8. Horowitz, Micheal, “The history and future of suicide terrorism”. Notes from presentation at The Foreign Policy Research Institute on 28 June, 2008.
9. Zedalis, Debra. “Female Suicide Bombers” June. ISBN 1-58487-162-8, 2004.
10. Schweitzer, Yoram. Suicide bombing: Development and main characteristics. In B. Ganor (Ed.), Countering suicide bombing (Herzliya, Israel: Interdisciplinary Center, 2000), pp. 79–81
11. Hussain, Zia. Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), ISBN 0-231-14224-2
12. Stack, Joe. "Joe Stack: Antitax 'terrorist' or solo IRS-hater?". Christian Science Monitor. Retrieved February 18, 2010.
13. Ritzer, George. (“Sociological Theory”, (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1992), 3rd ed.
14. Egril, Dogu. “Suicide Terrorism in Turkey: The Workers’ Party of Kurdistan.” P.105-114, 118-128 in Countering Suicide Terrorism: An International Conference, (Herzliya, Israel: International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2001)

15. Durkheim, Emile. Suicide – a study in sociology (J.A. Spaulding & G. Simpson Trans.). Glencoe, Free Press. (Originally printed 1998 by Paris: Alcom)
16. Stack, Steven. “Durkheim’s Theory of Fatalistic Suicide: A Cross-National Approach.” The Journal of Social Psychology 107:161-168. World Health Organization. World health report 2001- Mental health: new understanding, a new hope. Geneva: Switzerland 2001; p 1-16. AD
17. Nachimias, David. and Chava. Nachimias, Research Methods in Social Sciences, (New York: St. Martin Press, 1992), 4th ed, P.386-89